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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

ON PETITION

In re Application of
Caius E. Egbufoama
Application No. 10/630,902
Filed: July 31, 2003
Title of Invention: INCINERATOR FURNACE
CONDENSERS AND METHODS OF USING

This is a decision on the petition under 37 CFR 1.137(a), filed October 18, 2005, to revive the above-identified application.

The petition is **DISMISSED**.

Any request for reconsideration of this decision must be submitted within TWO (2) MONTHS from the mail date of this decision. Extensions of time under 37 CFR 1.136(a) are permitted. The reconsideration request should include a cover letter entitled "Renewed Petition under 37 CFR 1.137(a)" or "Renewed Petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b)." This is **not** final agency action within the meaning of 5 U.S.C. § 704.

This application became abandoned on March 11, 2005 for failure to file a response to the non-Final Office Action mailed December 10, 2004. The instant petition and this decision precede the mailing of the Notice of Abandonment.

Petitioner asserts unavoidable delay in filing a timely response to the non-Final Office Action.

A grantable petition to revive an abandoned application under 37 CFR 1.137(a) must be accompanied by:

- (1) the required reply, unless previously filed. In a nonprovisional application abandoned for failure to prosecute, the required reply may be met by the filing of a continuing application. In an application or patent, abandoned or lapsed for failure to pay the issue fee or any portion thereof, the required reply must be the payment of the issue fee or any outstanding balance thereof;
- (2) the petition fee as set forth in § 1.17(l);

- (3) a showing to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that the entire delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition pursuant to this paragraph was unavoidable; and
- (4) any terminal disclaimer (and fee as set forth in § 1.20(d)) required pursuant to paragraph (c) of this section.

This petition lacks item (3), above.

SHOWING OF UNAVOIDABLE DELAY

Decisions on reviving abandoned applications on the basis of “unavoidable” delay have adopted the reasonably prudent person standard in determining if the delay was unavoidable:

The word ‘unavoidable’ . . . is applicable to ordinary human affairs, and requires no more or greater care or diligence than is generally used and observed by prudent and careful men in relation to their most important business. It permits them in the exercise of this care to rely upon the ordinary and trustworthy agencies of mail and telegraph, worthy and reliable employees, and such other means and instrumentalities as are usually employed in such important business. If unexpectedly, or through the unforeseen fault or imperfection of these agencies and instrumentalities, there occurs a failure, it may properly be said to be unavoidable, all other conditions of promptness in its rectification being present.¹

With regard to item (3), decisions on reviving abandoned applications on the basis of “unavoidable” delay have adopted the reasonably prudent person standard in determining if the delay was unavoidable:

Petitioner has indicated that at the time the Notice was mailed that he had been living in Nigeria, Africa, and gives as the dates he began living in Nigeria as both November 2003 and November 2004. Petitioner further explains that his agent was unable to contact him in Africa.

Petitioner has not acted with diligence to have an updated address where he could be

¹In *re Mattullath*, 38 App. D.C. 497, 514-15 (1912)(quoting *Ex parte Pratt*, 1887 Dec. Comm’r Pat. 31, 32-33 (1887)); see also *Winkler v. Ladd*, 221 F. Supp. 550, 552, 138 USPQ 666, 167-68 (D.D.C. 1963), *aff’d*, 143 USPQ 172 (D.C. Cir. 1963); *Ex parte Henrich*, 1913 Dec. Comm’r Pat. 139, 141 (1913). In addition, decisions on revival are made on a “case-by-case basis, taking all the facts and circumstances into account.” *Smith v. Mossinghoff*, 671 F.2d 533, 538, 213 USPQ 977, 982 (D.C. Cir. 1982). Finally, a petition cannot be granted where a petitioner has failed to meet his or her burden of establishing that the delay was “unavoidable.” *Haines v. Quigg*, 673 F. Supp. 314, 316-17, 5 USPQ2d 1130, 1131-32 (N.D. Ind. 1987).

located with either the USPTO or with his agent and thus as a result, the cause of delay in filing a response to the non-Final Office Action can only be seen as an action that could have been avoided. Instead of an unavoidable delay, the failure to provide petitioner's agent with contact information for him demonstrates a lack of diligence.

The showing presented is insufficient to establish unavoidable delay within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. § 133 and 37 CFR 1.137(a). Specifically, an application is "unavoidably" abandoned only where petitioner, or counsel for petitioner, takes all action necessary for a proper response to the outstanding Office action, but through the intervention of unforeseen circumstances, such as failure or mail, telegraph, telefacsimile, or the negligence of otherwise reliable employees, the response is not timely received in the Office.²

ALTERNATIVE VENUE

Petitioner may wish to consider filing a renewed petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b)³, which now provides that where the delay in reply was unintentional, a petition may be filed to revive an abandoned application or a lapsed patent pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b).

The filing of a petition under the unintentional standard cannot be intentionally delayed and therefore should be filed promptly. A person seeking revival due to unintentional delay cannot make a statement that the delay was unintentional unless the entire delay, including the delay from the date it was discovered that the application was abandoned until the filing of the petition to revive under 37 CFR 1.137(b), was unintentional. A statement that the delay was unintentional is not appropriate if petitioner intentionally delayed the filing of a petition for revival under 37 CFR 1.137(b).

²Ex parte Pratt, 1887 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 31 (Comm'r Pat. 1887).

³Effective December 1, 1997, the provisions of 37 CFR 1.137(b) now provide that where the delay in reply was unintentional, a petition may be filed to revive an abandoned application or a lapsed patent pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b). A grantable petition filed under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.137(b) must be accompanied by:

(1) the required reply, unless previously filed. In a nonprovisional application abandoned for failure to prosecute, the required reply may be met by the filing of a continuing application. In an application or patent, abandoned or lapsed for failure to pay the issue fee or any portion thereof, the required reply must be the payment of the issue fee or any outstanding balance thereof.

(2) the petition fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(m);

(3) a statement that the entire delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b) was unintentional. The Commissioner may require additional information where there is a question whether the delay was unintentional; and

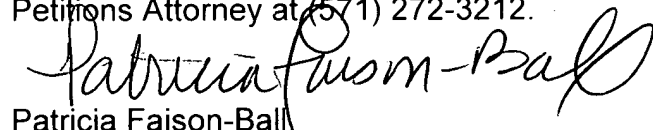
(4) any terminal disclaimer (and fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.20(d)) required pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(c)).

It should be noted that if petitioner chooses to file a petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b), the fee for a small entity is set at \$750.00 and the \$250.00 paid for the unavoidable petition under 37 CFR 1.137(a) will not be credited towards that payment. Petitioner has already received consideration under that standard and the fees are not transferable. Further correspondence with respect to this matter should be addressed as follows:

By mail: Mail Stop Petitions
 Commissioner for Patents
 P.O. Box 1450
 Alexandria VA 22313-1450

By FAX: (571) 273-8300
 Attn: Office of Petitions

Telephone inquiries concerning this matter may be directed to the undersigned
Petitions Attorney at (571) 272-3212.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patricia Faison-Ball", is written over the printed name.

Patricia Faison-Ball
Senior Petitions Attorney
Office of Petitions